



**MEETING SUMMARY
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION
UPPER EAST COAST WATER SUPPLY PLAN (Plan)
REGIONAL WORKSHOP
South Florida Water Management District
2001 South Rock Road
Ft. Pierce, Florida 34945
Friday, May 30, 2003**

Attendees:

Lennart Lindahl – SFWMD Governing Board Member

WRAC Members:

Doug Bournique

Patrick Hayes

WRAC Alternates:

John Mitnik

Byron Maharrey

Gene Duncan

Interested Parties:

Kimberley Lippman

Steve Lamb

Patrick Gleason

John Holt

Michael Minton

Jason Geary

Peter Merritt

Carrie Beeler

Bob Bangert

George Johnson

Richard Stenberg

Ariane Stendley

Bruce McLeod

Kathleen Higgins

Paul Whalen

Linda McCarthy

A. L. Standlay

J. Hogj

Don West

Donna Smith

Flip Gates

Daniel Hoot

Anne Murray

Greg New

SFWMD Staff:

Michelle Percy

Sharon Fowler

Mark Elsner

Keith Smith

David Unsell

John Mulliken

Beth Ross

Keith Smith

Linda Hoppes

David Gilpin-Hudson

Don Medellan

Patty Sime

Pat Walker

Kathy LaMartina

Welcome and Introductions by Len Lindahl, Governing Board Member. Mr. Lindahl thanked the USDA for providing the facility for this meeting. The discussion on the Upper East Coast Water Supply will focus on where the District is currently and how they will be

moving forward. Everyone attending introduced him or herself and stated what area of interests they represented.

Michael Minton, former Governing Board Member at SFWMD, spoke on the past history of the Water Supply Plan. He provided information on the Indian River Lagoon Plan in CERP and said he would like the plan fully integrated with this plan. He also would like to have more flexibility in the plan and the system and that will assist the public in the areas to the north and the south.

Mr. Lindahl said he agreed with Mr. Minton on providing more flexibility in the plans and said there is no reason for the citizens to be paying for two sets of infrastructure. He also said there is no need to ... "box us in on only having one plan."

Mr. Minton said that freshwater is important and proper management will help the environment and the community.

Mr. Lindahl said today's meeting will be conducted in a relaxed manner and following each presentation, a discussion period would be held. He thanked Mr. Minton for his comments and said he is right on target regarding his comments on the Indian River Lagoon Plan.

Presentation:

Proposed Process and Schedule, by Michelle Percy, Director, Planning & Development Division, Water Supply Department, SFWMD

Ms. Percy provided information on the following:

- Role of WRAC Regional Workshops
- Recommendation(s) Review & Approval Process
- Water Supply Plan Requirements
- Document Organization and Content

The requirements are a 20-year planning period, 1 in 10 level of certainty and water resource development, water supply development, and minimum flows and levels. Chapter 373 requires that the District establish minimum flows and levels. Water supply plans are being prepared for four regional planning regions – Kissimmee Basin, Lower East Coast, Upper East Coast, and West Coast. Information on the existing water supply plan and the schedule for plan updates were presented. There will be at least five public workshops in each region and they will be conducted as *Water Supply Plan Regional Workshops* and will be an opportunity to build consensus. Feedback will be given to the SFWMD Water Resources Advisory Commission and the SFWMD Governing Board. Information on the five upcoming workshops was reviewed.

Mr. Lindahl provided comments on the presentation and asked for comments or questions from the attendees.

The results of the five workshops will be brought back to the WRAC and then the WRAC will make recommendations to the Governing Board. Further question and answer session.

A request for a presentation by a staff member from St. Johns River Water Management District and a staff members from SFWMD to provide information on the area west and north of Ft. Pierce and explain all the work that has been done. Boundary conditions, changes and opportunities in the area will be covered in that future presentation. Sharon Fowler will arrange for the speakers at a future meeting.

Presentation:

1998 Upper East Coast (UEC) Water Supply Plan (Plan) Overview, by Mark Elsner, Lead Engineer, Planning & Development Div., Water Supply Department, SFWMD

- Review of UEC Water Resources and Uses
- UECWSP 1998 Process and Findings

Mr. Elsner provided information on the planning area, the resources within the planning area, the assumptions, and the recommendations. Implementation of the plan will be explained during Sharon Fowler's presentation.

The Upper East Coast generalized cross-section was shown on a map and information provided. The planning horizon for 2020 was approved in 1998 and was the first plan to meet statutory requirements. An advisory committee was established as part of the 1998 Plan and included 30 representatives from federal, state, and local interests, including agriculture, county, and business members.

The plan has five major components. Information on Water Use Assessment and population growth (the population in the area was projected to increase by 80 percent over the next 20 years), and the citrus industry was given.

Mr. Lindahl asked if a citrus and agricultural industry representative could arrange to present information on water use and the state of the industry at the next meeting. Doug Bournique, WRAC member and Indian River Citrus League representative, said he would work with SFWMD staff to arrange for a presenter on this matter.

A comprehensive modeling effort was utilized in development of the plan to identify issues. Issues identified in the UEC planning area included limited expansion of the surficial aquifer system in specific areas due to potential harm to wetlands and salt water intrusion; surface water availability for agricultural use is limited during times of low rainfall; and freshwater discharges to the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon.

To address these issues, eight water source options were identified and evaluated including, conservation, utility interconnects, aquifer storage & recovery, water reuse, new wellfields, Floridan aquifer system, ocean water, and surface water storage. The Plan concluded the needs of the region can be met with appropriate management and diversification of water supply sources.

There are over 30 recommendations in the Plan and Mr. Elsner reviewed several of those recommendations. Implementation costs were estimated to be \$19 million over five years, with 14 fulltime equivalents and future capital projects.

Dr. Patrick Gleason, former SFWMD Governing Board member, said staff on this plan had done a very good job. In the future, he would like to see more information and action on alternative water supplies and he stated his support for the District Alternative Water Supply Grant Program to stimulate alternative water supply efforts. He encouraged the District to continue to support this program in the amount of \$4 million as it has over the past four years. He also discussed the estuaries and restoration of the Loxahatchee River and made suggestions on the problems in the area.

Patrick Hayes commented on the alternative water supply projects and the funding for this matter.

Mr. Lindahl provided information on the water supply plan and the Loxahatchee River. He asked staff to put their heads together and resolve a perceived "disconnect" in the Basin plans. Pat Walker, Water Supply Department staff member at SFWMD, said that matter has been addressed in the North Palm Beach County CERP Project, Part 1, and that political boundary has been erased, and the project is moving ahead. Potential connects need to be a priority, and Mr. Lindahl asked that this whole issue be put in the correct perspective.

Questions on potable water (desalination process), wastewater, etc. were asked and answered. Mr. Lindahl assisted with further information on reclaimed water and the health issues associated with it. Investigation is continuing on this area of water planning. Storage is a large part of the problem, because there is no storage in the current system. Mr. Elsner also provided information on potable and reuse of water.

Public and staff comments continued.

Presentation:

Accomplishments, by Sharon Fowler, Senior Planner, Planning & Development Div.
Water Supply Department

- Implementation of 1998 Plan
- Related activities since 1998 Plan

Ms. Fowler spoke on the accomplishments of the former plan (since 1998). Information on the Surface Water Storage Option, including the establishment of minimum flows and levels for the St. Lucie Estuary in 2002, the C-23 Canal Dredging Project, and Floridan Aquifer.

Closing leaking Floridan wells prevents the deterioration of the surficial aquifer while saving water in the Floridan aquifer. Information on the brackish water treatment facilities was provided. Conservation includes developing fiscal incentives, providing funding for urban mobile irrigation laboratories, and developing cooperative approaches. Microjet irrigation has saved billions of gallons of water. Urban and agricultural mobile irrigation laboratories saved 8.5 million gallons from 1998-2002. Further areas covered were water reuse and the regional wastewater treatment facilities.

The presentation included information on Alternative Water Supply Funding projects that create additional water and information on mitigation banks in the Upper East Coast.

Mr. Mitnik commented that the projects in the area are designed to improve the water quality.

In addition, northern demand and southern demand levels were discussed. The Indian River Lagoon SWIM Plan was updated in 2002 and the purpose of the plan is to attain water quality to support a healthy estuarine ecosystem and to support threatened and endangered estuarine species, fisheries, and wildlife.

Ms. Fowler spoke on overlap between the Indian River Lagoon SWIM Plan (Quality), IRL Restoration Feasibility Study (Storage/Timing) and the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan (Quantity).

Mr. Hayes addressed areas his concerns with estuaries, water quality in the aquifer, funding of laboratories, etc.

Mr. Mulliken and Ms. Fowler provided information on water quality in the aquifers and on the budgetary constraints faced by the SFWMD.

Mr. Hayes asked the Plan to consider the Loxahatchee River as a contributor to the Indian River Lagoon and the boundary lines in the SWIM plan; this matter was revisited. Mr. Lindahl provided information on the boundaries of the Plan and said the boundaries are difficult to expand. Mr. Bournique spoke on the boundaries and the water levels. Discussion continued on this matter.

Interested stakeholders and staff discussed the Well Abandonment Program. Mr. Elsner provided the background on the SFWMD's program. Reactivating this program and funding was discussed. Inter-governmental funding on a 50/50 cost share basis was offered. Suggestions were made for the SFWMD to come up with some type of program to close all wells that will never be used again (i.e., urban areas expanding into agricultural areas). There is a waiting list of people wanting to close their wells, but they cannot afford to do it themselves. Mr. Mulliken will check into this matter.

Further discussion ensued on the prevention strategy for the St. Lucie Estuary MFL.

Presentation:

Trends and Issues in Consumptive Use, by Keith Smith, Sr. Supervising Hydrogeologist, Water Use Division, Water Supply Dept., SFWMD

Mr. Lindahl provided background information on Consumptive Use Permitting and the "B" List Rules. This was a flagship process for the WRAC and the Governing Board.

Mr. Smith presented information on the Water Use Rule revisions, the Consumptive Use program at SFWMD, and an explanation on the status of the rules. The rules are divided into several phases, an A-list (completed and implemented in August 2002), and the B-list (Governing Board hearing in June requesting changes and then the planned implementation date is August). Future rulemaking will be done to address water reservations, minimum flows and levels, and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

The B-list Rules update was given by Mr. Smith, including information on permit renewal, diversion/impoundment, pasture, irrigation, wellfield operation plans, wetlands protection, etc.

The presentation continued with information on the use of the Floridan for ASR or reverse osmosis and for developing the Floridan for Public Water Supply (PWS). The UEC water supply is limited due to lack of connection to the regional system and lack of a prolific shallow aquifer. It is expected that growth in PWS will be met by the Floridan Aquifer. Floridan is considered an alternative source.

Mr. Lindahl asked questions on the "B" List Rules regarding anyone filing a Notice of Objection. He would like to meet with staff to discuss options to process the renewals of over 600 permits and placing staff in offices in the UEC area on particular days to assist the public in completing their applications in order to make the process easier.

Questions were asked by stakeholders on the *"B" List Rules Issue Workshops* and the process taken to reach the final Rules. Mr. Lindahl provided information. The Blaney-Criddle method was discussed.

The Public Interest Rule was discussed. Mr. Lindahl asked that this topic be put on the next agenda for the Upper East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan.

The impact evaluation of reservations in the "B" List Rules was discussed. Inconsistencies in the plan will be deleted.

Presentation:

Indian River Lagoon (IRL) feasibility Study Update by David Unsell, Lead Project Manager, Northern District Restoration

Mr. Unsell said this is a joint venture between the District and the Corps of Engineers. Information on the draft feasibility Study and the SEIS Components were shown.

The IRL South Benefits are:

- 26,264 acre-feet average annual supply;
- 1995 Base Ag Floridan withdrawals: 27 in 30 years;
- With plan withdrawals: 10 in 30 years.

The project status is that the Final Feasibility Report recommended plan was finalized September 6, 2002. The Indian River Lagoon - South Project is likely to be the first CERP project to be authorized. The goal for the project is authorization in WRDA 2004. The recommended plan has not changed. The report will be packaged with an addendum that will satisfy WRDA 2000 requirements. The new package will be titled Project Implementation Report (PIR).

PIR additional content includes the WRDA 2000 requirements for determination of Quantity of Water to be reserved; a Savings Clause; Operations & Monitoring Plan; and Ecological Monitoring Plan. The State of Florida requirements include engineering feasibility, cost

effectiveness information; water supply and water quality and flood protection information; assurance that the content is consistent with State and Federal laws and regulations; and coordination with utilities and other infrastructure.

The activities to complete the project were listed.

Mr. Lindahl provided further information.

Questions on the status of land acquisitions were addressed. There are no delays and land is being acquired as it becomes available, but there are funding limitations. General discussion on water supply issues followed.

Wrap Up/Next Steps by John Mulliken, Deputy Dept. Director, Water Supply Department, SFWMD

- Develop Future Workshop Location(s) & Schedule - In about six weeks, the next meeting will be held. That meeting will include information on the action items today.
- Mr. Lindahl said as a result of this meeting, future meetings will include presentations on the following subjects:
 1. Continued dialogue and consideration of the integration on CERP;
 2. Coupling St. Johns Water Management with SFWMD on boundary conditions and opportunities;
 3. Doug Bournique (or a representative of the Agricultural [Citrus] industry) on future projections on agriculture as they see it;
 4. Well-plugging program;
 5. Consumptive Use Permitting (CUP) - arrangements for temporary District staff in the SFWMD Service Centers to help the regulatory community with the permitting process; and
 6. Public Interest test with water supply plans.

He urged participation by stakeholders.

Mr. Mulliken said the next meeting will probably be held in Martin County.

Adjournment at 12:30 p.m.

Paula Moree
District Deputy Clerk

